

Topsfield Agricultural Commission
Minutes to the Meeting
April 2, 2012

- I. Call to Order:** Chair Trudi Perry called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Peter Gibney, James O'Brien, Peter Mulholland, Sabina Petersen . Visiting was Town Clerk, Paula Burke and Rebecca Weaver, Farmland Matching Service Coordinator / New Entry Sustainable Farming Project.
- II. Swearing in of Members.** Paula Burke took the oaths of Peter Gibney and Sabina Peterson as members of the Agricultural Commission . Paula Burke left the meeting at 7:25 p.m.
- III Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting of Nov 7 , 2011 meeting were read and approved as read.
Motion to approve : Peter Gibney Second: Peter Mulholland, Abstention, Sabina Peterson.
Voted in favor: 5-0

IV Old Business:

- a.) New Membership suggestions ; it was decided to write a letter to the Board of Selectmen and ask that they post openings on the Commission the Town website, We currently have openings for two members. Sabina mentioned that Rick Mukka (sp?) who had been involved with the Proctor Garden mechanics, may be interested.
- b.) The Proctor School Garden has been adopted by the school and plans are underway for another bumper crop season. Thanks to Sabina for being instrumental at getting this off the ground and really taking flight.
- c.) The BOS voted at their regularly scheduled meeting March 26 to appoint the members of Topsfield Agricultural Commission as "Special Municipal Employees".
- d) Trudi spoke of attending a group Ag Commission meeting with Ipswich and Boxford, joined by Bruce Tarr and Brad Hill. At that meeting it was discussed that local boards in towns should be required to notify the town's Agricultural Commission of any issues concerning agriculture and not address them after the fact. Brad Hill and Bruce Tarr said they would take this information in hand and see that steps are taken to make Ag Commissions more visible and relevant. It was decide to hold a follow-up joint Ag Commission meeting later in the season with more surrounding towns to check progress on what was discussed at that meeting and also to compare strategies and experiences.

V. New Business:

- a) the Commission heard a presentation by Rebecca Weaver of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project . Rebecca explained the purpose and ability of her grant-funded project to help match farmers of all sizes looking for land to lease or rent and those landowners who may not know that they have valuable property that can be put to good use. Rebecca said she and her group had had success in other towns in Massachusetts and would perform a GIS mapping operation to identify such land in Topsfield. She will present her findings to the Commission, along with next steps, at the next meeting, voted to take place for this purpose, sooner than regularly scheduled, April 23 , 2012 7:00 p.m. In the Town Hall Meeting Room. Rebecca left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

VI. Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm.
Motion: Peter Mulholland
Second: Peter Gibney
Voted in favor: 5 - 0